



BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

11th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Representing: Brownsville, Ocean Hill, Crown Heights, Greater Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Prospect Heights, Prospect Gardens, Grand Army Plaza, Windsor Terrace, Flatbush and Midwood

October 2, 2009

Congress Passes Rep. Clarke's Bill Making September National Preparedness Month

On Thursday, October 1st, the House of Representatives passed my resolution which supports the goals and ideals of National Preparedness Month in September. The resolution also commends the Department of Homeland Security employees, their partners at all levels of government, and the millions of emergency response providers for their dedicated service.

This resolution had strong bi-partisan support. Co-sponsors of this bill include: Reps. Gus Bilirakis, Joseph Cao, Christopher Carney, Henry Cuellar, Al Green, Jane Harman, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Mary Jo Kilroy, Sheila Jackson Lee, Daniel Lungren, Eric Massa, George Miller, Bill Pascrell, Laura Richardson, Mike Rogers, Loretta Sanchez, and Dina Titus.

Earlier this month, I chaired a field hearing in Brooklyn, N.Y. and heard from our first responders and examined interagency efforts to secure our nation from potential terrorist threats. As the Chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology, I will continue to address Homeland Security needs and fight for the women and men working on the front lines against terrorism.

Rep. Clarke Celebrates Cybersecurity Awareness Month



Rep. Clarke Attends Luncheon to Discuss EMPs and Cybersecurity Threats Facing Awareness

The goal of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is to show Internet users that taking simple precautions can safeguard them from the latest online threats and respond to potential cyber-crime incidents.

I commend the National Cybersecurity Division of the Department of Homeland Security, the National Cybersecurity Alliance, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and all of their national partners for sponsoring National Cybersecurity Awareness Month again this year.

This year, the theme of National Cyber Security Awareness Month is "Our Shared Responsibility." Earlier this year, I held a series of hearings on our nation's current strategy for cybersecurity defense and to raise awareness of the various vulnerabilities in our critical information infrastructure. To develop a comprehensive, proactive strategy for cybersecurity, I will be hosting a series of roundtables throughout the month of October. These roundtables will bring together industry leaders, academics, and government officials responsible for implementing a national strategy. I will ensure that all parties are working together so the American people get tangible and timely results that will protect their privacy, the economy, and our critical infrastructure from any potential attack.



Dear Neighbor:

This week, I joined New York officials in pushing Congress to adequately fund the Securing the Cities program, which would detect radioactive material before it entered New York City.

The Securing the Cities Initiative is an essential counterterrorism tool used to keep New York and the tri-state region safe from potential nuclear threats.

I was successful in getting the Clarke/King amendment, which would provide \$50 million for the program and radiological detection monitors, into the House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. I am now leading the fight to ensure that the money stays in the bill through the negotiations between the House and Senate.

New York City is the first site for the Securing the Cities program, which creates a multi-layered ring of sensors throughout the tri-state area. Sensors can detect radioactive and nuclear material before it enters the City.

As the only New York City Member on the Homeland Security Committee, I will continue to fight and ensure that we adequately fund the counterterrorism resources we need to protect our city and nation.

Sincerely,
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Bolstering the United States' Diplomatic Ties with the Caribbean



Picture includes Rep. Clarke meeting with Counsel Generals; Omyma David, of Antigua Barbuda, Lennox Price of Barbados, Derrick James of Grenada, Cosmus Covier of St. Vincent, Harold Robertson of Trinidad Tobacoo, Carl Smith of the Bahamas, Martha Smith of Saint Lucia, Felix Augustin of Haiti, Tracey Blackwood of Jamaica, and Brentwood Evans of Guyana.

Earlier last month, I had the chance to meet with the diplomatic Corp of Caribbean Counsel Generals to discuss issues pertaining to nationals during deportation process. There we discussed ways to encourage a fair and speedy process within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the transitional process when nationals are deported. Other issues of concern included DHS communication between the Department and the Counsels offices.

Fighting For Our Small Businesses

Small businesses in the construction industry have been disproportionately affected by our current economic downturn. Surety bonding, which is a process by which construction firms secure financing for their projects, is vital to success in the construction business. It offers a type of insurance on the successful completion of the project. Firms cannot work on a project without a surety bond, even if they are qualified and can win the contract. Small firms cannot access this essential financing without being well prepared and have found sources of surety drying up along with other forms of capital, due to the recession. Small firms, particularly minority, women, and veteran owned small construction firms, need assistance from legal, accounting, and business consultants to create the internal business systems essential for long term success. Having this business infrastructure will enable them to ultimately qualify for numerous types of financial and surety credit.

I recently spoke to the National Association of Surety Bond Professionals (NASBP) about this issue and how it is affecting small firms' ability to access construction jobs through the economic stimulus bill. I will be closely studying this issue and seeking opportunities to help small firms access this essential form of credit.

Medicare Fairness Premium Act H.R. 3631

Seniors in my district have expressed great concern about the potential shortfall that will begin in January 2010. For the first time in 35 years, Social Security recipients are not expected to get a cost-of-living adjustment in their benefits in 2010. As a result, Social Security recipients will receive less in their checks because of the higher Part B premiums that will be deducted.

Currently, Social Security withholds Part B premiums from the monthly checks of 77% of seniors nationwide. Many seniors choose to have the premium *directly* debited from their checks for convenience.

Congress has heard our senior's concerns and has responded by passing H.R. 3631, The Medicare Fairness Premium Act. This bill freezes Part B premiums for enrollees who are currently scheduled for an increase in premiums next year. This will keep Part B premiums in 2010 at the 2009 level. Regardless if premiums are directly debited out of your Social Security check or if you pay your premiums through other means, this freeze applies to you.

Legislative Spotlight

Ensuring that our students have access to the educational resources they need is one of my top legislative priorities. That is why I am a proud to support H.R. 3545, the Full-Service Community Schools Act.

This legislation would authorize a Department of Education grant program to significantly expand the number of full-service community schools across our nation.

Full-service community schools are public schools that coordinate educational and social service programs for students and families through collaborations with community-based organizations and public-private partnerships.

This bill is critical for my constituents. Brownsville has one of the highest rates of grade school absenteeism in New York City. This bill opens up a door for those students to further their education.

Over the last decade, research on full-service community schools consistently indicates positive outcomes in student achievement and attendance rates, as well as increases in parental involvement and access to preventative health services.

This legislation would;

- Authorize \$200 million to fund grants for local partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations,
- Provide grants for states to expand the full-service community school model at the state level.
- Require an annual report to Congress by the Department of Education about the program's progress and effectiveness.

I believe that access to an education is the gateway out of poverty. This bill is an essential tool to helping our students reach their greatest potential and become productive citizens in our nation.